FOOD IN CONNECTION WITH FESTIVITIES AND CEREMONIES

262 796 A discussion of food habits in Bang Chan would be incomplete without some description of ceremonies ((1)ngaan)[1] which dominate the village scene during the dry, post-harvest season. These events are of interest in connection with food habits because of 1) the prominent place that food occupies in them, 2) the cultural significance and relatively large cost, both of which must be taken into account in any plans for dietary improvement and 3) the possible influence of differences in food habits at the ceremonial season and of problems of sanitation incident to large-scale food preparation on the nutrition and health of village residents.

796 The season for ceremonies and festivities opened with the harvest rites to the Rice Goddess and closed with the beginning of Buddhist Lent in mid-July. The big occasions were cremations, ordinations into the Buddhist priesthood, weddings, and rites for cutting of the topknot[2] or homage-to-the-
527 teacher.[3] Smaller family celebrations might mark such events as the raising and dedicating of a house, the return of a son from the army, or even public events such as the completion
274 of a road or a bridge. Whatever the focal activity, a gala meal was served first to priests and then to guests.

[702] Offering food to priests brought merit, which ensured happiness in later rebirths (see p. 9). Because the greater the number of priests served, the greater the merit, people
550 were spurred to put on as large an affair as they could afford. Moreover, a person was judged throughout the commun-
527 ity by the abundance and quality of the food served daily and at festivities. Thus, there was reason to make a (1)ngaan
796 as opulent as possible, but celebrations of every degree occurred in Bang Chan, from lavish feasts to simple ceremonies.

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796 1. Significantly the same Thai word is used for work
41 and for ceremony.

2. Topknots, formerly worn by all Thai children, used
527 to be cut ritually at the time of puberty. In Bang Chan, the
535 growing of a topknot had become primarily an attempt to improve a child's health. Few school age children wore topknots. They were usually cut earlier than puberty.

575 3. A person who had received specialized knowledge from a teacher gave thanks annually in a ceremony, to which those who had profited by this knowledge were obliged to come and/or contribute. Thus, all the patients of a traditional medical practitioner helped him to honor his teacher.

4:Phillips E-4,5 (1956-1957) 1966
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human beings. In fact, the absence of any reference to other human beings, especially parents, is striking.

Of the seventeen persons who ask for supernatural help, seven, all women, explicitly say that they would call their *khwaan* (or "soul-stuff") back. Since this is a distinctively Thai concept, it merits a few words of explanation. Thai ontology holds that every individual is inhabited by a *khwaan*, who during childhood (when the individual is unstable and immature) or during a crisis can escape the body through an invisible hole in the head. One of the major functions of the top-knot worn by half the children of Bang Chan is to cover the invisible hole so that the *khwaan*

TABLE 21

If one is frightened, the best thing to do is . . .
If raw is frightened, the best thing raw ought to do is (namely) . . .

EQUANIMITY:	40%	to keep his heart calm.
		to pull yourself together (to try to compose yourself). Sometimes, just run away.
		to control oneself.
		to control your emotions until they are better.
		to stay *chəəj-chəəj*.
DEPENDENCY:	31%	to exclaim, "Lord help me!"
		to call one's soul-stuff back; call upon God, Allah.
		to think of Lord Buddha, his teaching, and his priests.
		to sometimes exclaim, "*phra chuaj*" ("Lord Buddha, or Buddhism, or monks—help me.")
FLIGHT:	8%	to avoid the situation; to run away.

cannot escape; also most life-cycle ceremonies have a special ritual devoted to "calling the *khwaan*," who although obviously not absent from the individual at the time, is called to reaffirm the necessity of his being in his place when the individual needs him most. At the same time, the formal ritual of "calling the *khwaan*" memorializes the fact that the *khwaan* is in his proper place, thus indicating that the individual in whom he resides has had the internal stability to reach the point in life that he has in fact reached. The "calling of the *khwaan*" is usually, although not always, performed by women, which might explain why all the villagers who give this response are female. The *khwaan* has four crucial attributes: (1) although he is of the self, he does have an independent existence of his own; (2) he is that part of the self that gives the self stability, and from an analytic point of view, is really an objectification of human stability; (3) he